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Ann. J. B. Gardner

BRIEF HISTORY
OF SOME OF THE INMATES OF THE
INDUSTRIAL HOME SCHOOL
OF THE
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA.

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To Hon. A. M. GANGEWER,
President Industrial Home School.

Ann. H. W. Blackford

More than three hundred children have passed through the hands of the Institution, and each child's history is peculiar and interesting. Each has some claim of helplessness or poverty to specially commend it to our care. I have seen it stated that more than six hundred little boys have been thought to be Charlie Ross. Now comes the question, Who provides for all these waifs?

Every thoughtful legislator can see that the establishment of these industrial homes will contribute more to the general good than any other expenditure. Therefore, we have made every effort to get homes in good families for the children, but we *wish* to keep them until we can send them out accomplished mechanics, with a good common-school education.

The children in our school could not possibly have been sent to the public schools, or had any advantages for an education, unless we had given them a helping hand. They would have been beggars and vagrants, and in time become inmates of the Reform School, or some penal institution. Very proper places for criminals; but is it not better to *prevent* the necessity for these places than to *fill* them? Is it not far better to bring them up to be self-supporting and respectable?

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Washington, D.C., 1875

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Our work has always outrun our means, so much so, that we have been grateful to have had the opportunity to set their feet in the right path, even if we could not keep them until they were thoroughly trained and educated. There are many boys who would learn trades if they had an opportunity to do so, but under the present system of trade unions they cannot secure places. Had we the means, we would extend our workshops, and enable every boy that wanted it to learn some useful trade.

MATTIE, JOSEPHINE and JULIA HOLDERBY, aged respectively nine, seven and five, came to us three years ago last November, on the death of their mother, who died of consumption, in the greatest poverty, brought to her deplorable condition by the dissipation and drunkenness of her husband.

Mr. Holderby was U. S. Consul to Scotland at one time, and married his wife there, who was a Scotch lady, a Miss Jane Thompson, of Aberdeen.

Later, Mr. Holderby was correspondent for the *New York Times* during the late war, but fell lower and lower, and finally went to the poorhouse, where the children would have gone if we had not taken them. The children are doing well attending the public school, getting an education. Martha wishes to qualify herself for a teacher, and is studying with that object in view. The father is hanging about, and had employment for a short time last year in the public gardens. Mattie is now thirteen.

JOHN CORBETT, parents too poor to send him to school, came to us, aged thirteen years; had never learned to read; was very ambitious; learned to read in Third Reader in a very short time; learned a good deal in our shop; afterwards finished his trade with Mr. Fry, a boss carpenter, and has been getting regular wages several years.

ALICE REILEY, aged 11. Had no father; mother a drunken prostitute, living in a miserable cellar. Alice was nearly starved when she first came to us. She attended the school and learned very fast; one of the managers took her into

her own family as servant. She was taught to read and sew, and to do housework. She afterwards lived four years, until she was married, with the Rev. Mrs. Williams who thought her a very valuable and trustworthy servant. She married a sober, steady mechanic, and is doing well. She probably would have been like her mother but for our intervention.

MARIA, JULIA, JOSEPH and EDWARD GROSS, children of a poor widow. We took them into the day school and the the shop. They were with us about a year, when their improvement in health and looks was very manifest. They learned to work, obtained situations, and at last accounts were doing well.

CHARLES BAKER, age twelve; mother died and left five young children; his father could not possibly support them all; Charles remained with us four years. It was his business to attend the engine; this he did so well that the Superintendent pronounces him now a competent engineer. He became a very good boy, and seemed to like his Sunday school. All the children seem to take pride in their appearance, and always to behave and look as well as possible when out.

JOHN BURKE, age thirteen. His father died three years ago; his mother was a servant, and unable to obtain a situation, unless she could get a place for John. We took him and sent him to school; he is a very promising boy; has taken a great many prizes at school, and all his teachers praise him. His mother died in the poorhouse last Summer, (July, 1874,) and he now has no friends in the world but us.

LIZZY SEYMOUR, age eleven; mother a servant, and had to put Lizzy somewhere; we took her; her mother was taken sick with rheumatism; was sent to Providence hospital, and died there, leaving Lizzy friendless. She was adopted a few months ago by a lady without children, in good circum-

stances, and they love her as if she was their own. She is better off than she probably ever would have been with her mother.

FRANK CONWAY, age twelve. Brought to us by his father, who had been a soldier, serving in Mexico under General Scott; also all through the late war in the regular army, and possessed an honorable discharge. Frank lost his mother in Texas while an infant, and his second mother when six years of age. He was a bright, good boy. His father begged us to take him, and he would gladly pay his board if he could get employment, but he was intemperate, and fell from a horse a few months after and was killed. Through the intervention of one of our officers his remains were interred at Soldiers' Home. Frank remained with us two years after his father's death, and then enlisted as drummer in the army.

One boy, THOMAS ZEIDULDI, was arrested for stealing a clothes line. Upon inquiry by the Magistrate it was found that he was one of six children his mother, a widow and destitute. It appeared he had some idea that he could sell the clothes line to get them something to eat. He was sent to us; we took the other children, found places for the older children, helped the mother to a situation, and aided the whole family. Thomas stayed with us a year, attending school, and working in the shop alternately, and was bright and obedient, and showed a good disposition every way. We secured for him a situation in Baltimore, and I have no doubt he is doing well,—better off than if he had been sent to a penal institute until he was twenty-one.

These histories are but an average of hundreds. Many cases come crowding to mind as I finish writing. We are very poor, but every day I see a dozen or more trudging by to school, and I thank God that I am allowed to do even so much to help humanity onward and upward.

Mrs. H. W. BLACKFORD.

GEORGETOWN, D. C., *Feb'y* 17, 1875.